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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8305
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE PRIORITY 0145

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 001112

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DEPT. FOR EUR/RPM, EUR/SCE, EUR/WE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/2018

TAGS: PREL NATO EU MK GR UK

SUBJECT: HMG WILL CONTINUE TO ENGAGE WITH ATHENS AND SKOPJE
ON MACEDONIA NAME/NATO ACCESSION ISSUE

REF: STATE 40462

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Maura Connolly for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) HMG has been engaging, and will continue to engage with, senior Greek leadership to encourage Athens to be more flexible in its position on the Macedonia name issue. FCO Balkans Group Deputy Director Adam Bye said that the British Ambassador (HMA) to Greece had met with Foreign Minister Bakoyiani on April 14, stressing many of the points contained reftel. Bakoyiani's reaction showed little movement from that of the Greek position we have heard over the past few months - that it was Skopje refusing to be flexible, and that Greece has worked as hard as it could within the UN mediating process. According to Bye, Bakoyiani also added that progress was unlikely before the June 1 Macedonian elections.

Bye said the FCO would summarize the points contained reftel for HMA in Athens, advise him of the other countries the USG has requested to assist, and ask him to approach the FM once again. HMA may also contact Ambassador Speckhard to discuss joint approaches to the Greek government.

¶2. (C) Bye underlined that HMG is as concerned as the USG about the Greece-Macedonia impasse, and its impact on the NATO Alliance and Balkan stability and in the longer term, EU unity. He shared a readout of an April 18 video conference which he attended and included representatives from UK Missions to Greece, Macedonia, NATO and the EU: the UK appreciates and will continue to support U.S. efforts to remove the Greek block on Macedonian accession to NATO; the June 1 Macedonian elections represent an additional challenge, and the UK will urge political parties on all sides not to politicize the name issue or appeal to nationalistic instincts to gain support; while the UK shares the U.S. desire that this issue be resolved within the next few weeks, it is more likely to require a "sustained push," at least until the Macedonian elections; and, the UK will lobby other EU members to exert influence on Athens.

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